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ABSTRACT

A number of propositions about power in America--taken from the work of Olson, Lowi, McConnell, Schattschneider, and Edelman--are presented and discussed. These propositions comprise an alternative theory to pluralism, which is termed "plural elitism." But neither pluralism nor plural elitism explains the emergence and effects of the social movements in America of the last two decades. Fifteen propositions about the relationships among social movements, interest groups, and public policy are stated. They constitute a perspective which is termed "a new group theory," that draws upon plural elitism, the study of public-interest lobbies, and the new social movement theory of political sociology. It is concluded that another theory of political power in America could be based on this new group theory. (Author)

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RECENT SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THEORIES OF POWER IN AMERICA

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Introduction

A lengthy discussion of the pluralist theory of power and its downfall is not needed. It suffices to say that the work of Dahl, Truman, Lindblom, and others provided a coherent and convincing theory of power in America. Dahl's polyarchy and the implicit "economic theory of democracy" provided a theory of elections. Truman's description of American institutions and politics as a complex texture of decentralized bargaining among a myriad of interest groups was readily assimilated into Dahl's pluralist discussion of power. Lindblom's theory of incremental decision-making showed why policies emerging from decentralized bargaining within polyarchy might be both more effective and representative than policies emerging from central governmental direction. A number of talented political scientists--such as Banfield, Wildavsky, and Polsby--applied this pluralist perspective to many institutions and arenas of power, such as urban politics, Congress, and the federal budgeting process.[1]

The achievements of the pluralist school may have been much greater then it is the current fashion to recognize. But the credibility of the pluralist argument was destroyed for many by common experiences in the politics of the late 1960's and early 1970's. It did not seem to have a lot to do with either how we got into, or got out of, Vietnam. More than one political science instructor lectured his class on pluralism, wondering whether he could finish without being forcibly disrupted by the protagonists or antagonists of the latest social movement on campus. Pluralism did not illuminate why from the ground, some

sections of our older cities resemble photographs of bombed-out Germany in 1945, while from the air, some of our newer cities can be seen only indistinctly due to the permeation of the skies by chemical trash.

In this situation, many younger political scientists turned to Marxism, now a much more attractive theoretical option because of the reinterpretations of orthodoxy by such writers as Gramsci, Miliband, and Poulantzas.[2] When writing about interest groups and power in America, others in the discipline cited with great frequency such anti-pluralist, non-Marxist writers as Lowi, Olson, Schattschneider, and McConnell.[3] By the late 1970's, anti-pluralist Lowi in the opinion of many had replaced pluralist Dahl as the most influential person in the discipline.[4]

At present the discussion of power in America is quite confused. One suspects that pluralism is very much with us--in freshmen textbooks, local colleges, high school civics classes, and in uncritical political-economic discussions of politics in terms of working political markets. Professor Lowi writes thought provoking essays about the cooptation of the state by status-quo interest groups, but he has not set forth an alternative theory of power and the state, rigorously distinguished from the pluralists, the Marxists, and Lindblom's recently stated view of corporate dominance.[5] Thus political science is hindered by the lack of rigorous statement of an apparently widely accepted view: power in America is largely a matter of cooptation of specific public-policy areas by elites, serving their own private interests. Such a theory of power is termed by Prewitt and Stone "multiple elitism," although here I prefer to use the term "plural elitism."[6]

The Theory of Plural Elites

Specific authors in this vein are among the most widely cited in the discipline, yet there is no general statement of this point of view which synthesizes various writers and their hypotheses. There is not even an accepted term for this theory of power, which I call "plural elitism."

Since a systematic advocate of plural elitism has not yet appeared, I shall outline such a theory of power even though I disagree with much of the theory. However, I believe that an important advance in the theory of power might be gained through the inspection of the limitations of plural elite theory. One such limitation, treated herein, is that plural elitism, like pluralism, does not explain the impact of social movements on American politics.

Below are stated thirteen propositions which indicate the convergence among the various plural elitist writers. Probably no single such writer would agree with every proposition. Certainly the writers disagree among themselves about the proper prescription for special-interest rule (responsible political parties versus juridical democracy versus McConnell's New Deal model, and so forth).[7] I maintain only that the propositions are generally congruent with one another, and that taken together, they indicate how one might construct a synthetic theory of plural elitism in America.[8]

Proposition One. Organizational Costs. (Olson)
Presuming economic, cost-benefit reasoning, widely shared interests will not be organized because it is not to the benefit of any individual to incur the time and money costs of organizing the group.

Proposition Two. The Free-Rider Problem. (Olson)
When an interest group produces public goods (collective benefits), members lose incentive to contribute to the maintenance of the interest group, because they will receive the benefit anyway. This is particularly true of large groups. Because of this free-rider problem, an interest group will lose influence and may cease to exist.

Proposition Three. The Few Defeat the Many. (Olson)
The interests of a few are less prone to high organizational costs and to the free-rider problem. The organization of very widespread interests, on the other hand, is very susceptible to these problems. Therefore, within a particular policy system, the few tend to defeat the many because the few tend to be better organized.

Proposition Four. Symbols in Politics; the Few Defeat the Many. (Edelman)
Very widespread but unorganized publics are prone to irrational perceptions of political reality. Such publics confuse symbol with substance--that is, elites manipulate public opinion by creating political forms which give the impression that some problem is being solved, or some policy is being followed, when this is not the case. On the other hand, political groups consisting of a few corporations do not usually confuse symbol with substance. Such small groups, following rational political strategies, will frequently defeat the interests of very large publics, confused by political symbols and following irrational political strategies.

Proposition Five. Restricting the Scope of Conflict. (Schattschneider)
Manipulation of the scope of conflict is a basic political strategy. Therefore, well-organized special interests will manipulate the context of political conflict to prevent "public interests" from manifesting themselves in the conflict.

Proposition Six. The Structure of American Political Institutions. (McConnell)
The decentralized and fragmented nature of American political institutions frequently helps the few defeat the many. Public interests are best represented by the Presidency, the Supreme Court, and within general, conflictful policy debates in Washington. On the other hand, special interests tend to be more powerful in state and local politics, and within fragmented administrative policy systems, which are not subject to public control by the President or by the federal courts. Americans share an ideology of the virtue of political decentralization, but this ideology in fact helps special interests defeat public interests.

Proposition Seven. Congress Creates Unneeded Bureaucracy. (Fiorina)
During the 1970's, members of Congress have learned to increase their probability of re-election by legislating new federal bureaucracy, which creates a myriad of new regulations. Members of Congress then help their constituents with problems resulting from such regulations, which increases the popularity of incumbent members. The result is a special-interest coalition: a Washington establishment.

Proposition Eight. Ambiguous Statutes. (Lowi)
In enacting general interest legislation, American legislators write ambiguous statutes. Such vaguely written laws provide opportunities for special interests to redirect the implementation of such laws to their own benefit.

Proposition Nine. Government Subsidies for Established Interest Groups. (Lowi)
Beginning in the 1960's, the federal government instituted vast programs of subsidies (especially through subsidized loans) for established interest groups. This tends to freeze the political system in the status quo, retard policy innovation, and lessen the influence of newly emerging interests.

Proposition Ten. Power Structure Varies by Issue-Area. (Lowi)
While some policy areas are characterized by pluralism, other areas are characterized by elite dominance--an area specific elite controls policy without effective political competition. In addition, class conflict may ensue if the existing distribution of property is at issue.

Proposition Eleven. Subgovernments. (many writers)
In American public administration, the few defeat the many through the mechanism of the subgovernment. This is a coalition of interest groups, public administrators, and members of Congress serving on the relevant committees, which controls the administration of public policy for the benefit of those within the subgovernment. Such policies usually benefit established economic interests. A subgovernment will try to destroy executive agencies, operating within the same policy area but outside of the subgovernmental coalition. Such agencies, which compete with subgovernments, include a disproportionate number of those which represent general interests or the poor. The political patterns described in the other propositions are manifest in the politics of subgovernments.

Proposition Twelve. Reform Cycles. (Lowi, McConnell, Edelman, Bernstein)
American politics is subject to reform cycles in specific areas of policy. At times general-interest coalitions defeat the subgovernmental coalitions and enact reform legislation in specific areas of public policy. But at a later time, public attention to a policy area wanes, and the subgovernment re-establishes its control.

Proposition Thirteen. Interest-Group Liberalism. (Lowi)
Since the New Deal, an ideology, "interest-group liberalism," has been prevalent among political scientists, moderate and liberal politicians and civil servants, and intellectuals. This ideology is the phenomenological equivalent to academic pluralist theory. Interest-group liberalism implies that people know their own interests, are able to express these interests in political organizations, and are then able to gain access to policy makers. The resultant policy outcomes are seen as fair, because interest groups balance one another. It is believed that significant social change can be achieved within the present structure of group organization. However, this ideology distorts the perception of American political reality, which is primarily characterized by a lessening of the degree of democracy.

It is noteworthy that these propositions can be added together to form a general argument. Essentially this argument states that (1) many widely shared interests cannot be effectively organized within the political process; (2) politics tends to be fragmented into decision-making in various specific policy areas, which are normally controlled by special-interest coalitions; (3) there are a variety of specific processes whereby plural elitist rule is maintained; (4) a widespread ideology conceals this truth about American politics.

Olson's propositions are among the most widely discussed in contemporary political science. A frequent objection to The Logic of Collective Action is that political man is not economic man. As James Q. Wilson points out, we need to consider purposive and solidary incentives, in addition to material incentives for joining a political organization.[9] But is is important to realize that Edelman provides an argument which complements Olson's logic from the perspective of plural elitism. From a social-psychological point of view, Edelman arrives at the same conclusions as Olson. To Edelman, citizens in mass publics act irrationally because elites manipulate political information. Because of this manipulation, the average person frequently cannot act rationally, because he is not aware of which means best bring about his desired ends. For example, the citizen is led to assume that the passage of anti-trust legislation will control the activities of monopolies, and the citizen will falsely assume that this means is bringing about his desired end, the control of big business.

Thus, if one assumes that citizens calculate rationally in economic fashion, Olson indicates that many widespread interests will not be organized. If one assumes "irrational man," Edelman provides a

parallel series of arguments for oligarchic control of specific issue areas. If one assumes that behavior is partly calculated and partly emotional, Olson and Edelman combined still argue that important, widespread interests will go unorganized.

While not discussed explicitly, the Olson-Edelman logic clearly implies that elitism has a greater chance for success within limited policy areas (e.g., setting tariffs for trucking, dispensing grazing permits for federal lands). According to Olson, if business-consumer conflicts, for example, are conducted by broad-based coalitions in conflict over general issues, both coalitions will decay because of the free-rider principle.[10] Elite control is more possible if the political system is splintered into a myriad of issue areas, in which a sub-governmental coalition of a few score units is easily maintained, while consumer interests (for example) are impossible to organize. Taking Edelman's point of view, one can say that citizens actually do have some accurate information about widely discussed, general issues but they are unlikely to be aware or informed about specific issues, such as the nature of trucking regulation.

Lowi accepts Dahl's observation that power should be analyzed by issue area, but both he and McConnell argue that elitism is the more significant pattern of power within specific issue areas than pluralism. Schattschneider can be added here. One can reasonably expect that sub-governmental elites will manipulate political information to discourage participation by wide publics within specific policy systems. Edelman is then relevant. If politics is viewed as primarily conducted in fragmented policy systems, then the manipulation of symbols need not be massive propaganda campaigns, but merely specific plausible statements.

For example, one might convince the public that the construction of dams is scientifically determined by the computation of cost-benefit ratios, and then manipulate the terms of the ratios in specific instances to the benefit of a subgovernment. Thus, the more politics is a matter of policy-making within specific arenas, the easier it is for elites to organize and to get their way, but the harder for widespread interests to organize.

Meanwhile, several particular processes enhance and strengthen the bond between government and established interest groups. According to Fiorina, Congress is only too happy to increase bureaucracy. While the initial purpose of many of the new agencies is some sort of regulation in "the public interest," plural elitists predict eventual capturing of the new agencies by the interest grups which are supposedly regulated, as part of the usual cycle from reform to capture to reform to recapture. In addition, federal loans and tax subsidies help established economic powers to entrench themselves. Laws are written so vaguely that they can be reinterpreted during the implementation process because of the pressure of established groups.

The picture of the American political system, then, is one of stasis. Thus Lowi speaks of the current American political system as in a "state of permanent receivership" in which "government maintains a steadfast position that any institution large enough to be a significant factor in the community may have its stability underwritten" by government.[11] He comments that in "the state of permanent receivership there is a tremendous pro-organization, pro-establishment, anti-innovation bias."[12] McConnell concluded: "Federalism and the interest

"pluralism" with which it is associated today are instruments of conservatism and particularism."[13]

But perhaps there is more room for change than this in America. Generally speaking, the plural elitists wrote too early to take into cognizance the social movements of the last two decades: civil rights, women, environmentalist, consumer, peace, government-reform, and so forth.[14] Many would consider that these social movements have brought about significant change in the face of opposition by subgovernmental clusters of power.

Perhaps this is the chief reason why no one has bothered to advocate a general theory of plural elitism, synthesizing these and other writers. Social movements have clearly falsified an unalloyed plural elitist theory of power structure. Let us then turn to a consideration of these social movements and what they might mean for a theory of power in America.

A New Group Theory?

Marxist theories of power hinge on the concept of "class"; elitist theories of power center on the analysis of holders of high social positions. Similarly, both the pluralist and the plural-elitist theories of power are largely based on theories of interest groups. They belong to a family of theories of power, centering on the analysis of political groups (as opposed to classes), which as yet has no name. Such interest-group theories of power need not be apologetic, as the discussion of plural elitism demonstrates.

Since pluralism is now advocated in print by only a few persons, and plural-elitism is advocated only segmentally and not in its complete form, it is apparent that the interest-group perspective on power is currently in confusion. But it is too early to regard the interest-group perspective as a failure in stating a general theory of power in America. Recent studies which bear on the relationships among interest groups and social movements indicate that "a new group theory" can be formulated, which would account for the dynamic aspects of American politics better than pluralism or plural-elitism did.

Before we examine social movements, let us note six types of characteristics which a new group theory might have. (1) It would state what is accepted, as well as rejected, from pluralist theory. Probably most political scientists today find Dahl's theory of polyarchy to be useful, while most would agree that incremental decision-making is descriptive of at least some policy-making situations. (2) A new group theory would state which propositions of plural elitism are accepted, and under what circumstances they are accepted. For example, Lowi's observation that power structure varies by issue area and Schattschneider's views on the scope of political conflict are now regarded as axiomatic by most political scientists. On the other hand, the new theorists of political groups would regard most of the other plural elitist propositions as overstatements. Thus, Olson-Edelman, for example, may explain why groups do not attain their full potential of membership, but they do not predict very well which groups will organize.[15]

(3) A new group theory also would address other significant theories in the interest group tradition, such as the currently influential views of Charles E. Lindblom and the corporatist theory of Philippe Schmitter. Lindblom's Politics and Markets posits a group theory in which large corporations dominate the American system by controlling the major decisions of macro-economic policy, especially through their power over the agenda setting process. Defined in terms of a negation of pluralism in several respects, Schmitter's model of corporatist interest-group structure in several European countries emphasizes the importance of institutionalized bargaining among the leadership of government and interest-group sectors, which are hierarchically organized and which have compulsory membership.[16] The question naturally arises: why is there such a low degree of corporatist structure in America? (Note that "corporatist" does not refer to business, but instead refers to the opposite of "atomized.")

(4) Obviously a new group theory will include empirical studies of group phenomena. Such studies would include those of groups and their relationship to social movements, "single issue groups," lobbying, group characteristics in relationship to incentives (e.g., Wilson's Political Organizations), and the theory of interest aggregation.

(5) A new group theory would have a prescriptive element, although this would vary with the perspective of various writers. Thus, plural elitist writers advocated responsible two-party government (Schattschneider), juridical democracy (Lowi), and New Deal political structures (McConnell). New group theorists might be expected to advocate a variety of measures: Kelso's public pluralism,[17] financial

aid for public interest groups, shoring up the party system (in relation to the power of single-issue groups), an increase of corporatist decision-making on macroeconomic issues, and so forth. The new group theorists might be expected to be as varied in their advocacy as the plural elitists.

(6) New group theory would need to scrutinize the concept of representation. As Pitkin observed, there are a number of conceptions of representation, each of which has a varying significance and relationship to the other conceptions, depending on specific situations.[18] Some such sophistication is needed to analyze a dominant theme in plural elitist theory: that many areas of public policy are controlled by "special interests" to the detriment of "general interests" or of "the public interest." To understand such statements we must understand what it means for "general interests" or "public interests" to be fairly represented in the political process. Would we recognize such a fair system of representation if one existed?

Social Movements and Interest Groups in America

A new group theory could follow the lead of the Vanderbilt school of political sociologists and emphasize the relationships of interest groups to social movements.[19] In this respect, the Vanderbilt sociologists emphasize the importance of political resources, political organization, and an exchange theoretical analysis of resources in the analysis of social movements and their associated interest groups. Much of this work is similar to that of such political-economic writers as James Q. Wilson and Mancur Olson, Jr., except that the movement aspects are given greater emphasis by the sociologists.

The work of Maurice Pinard and of Jo Freeman is essentially similar to that of the Vanderbilt school.[20] However, Pinard and Freeman give singular emphasis to the idea that intermediary groups can facilitate the spread of social movements by providing communications networks which rapidly disseminate new sociopolitical ideas. This "Pinard hypothesis" is thus opposed to the typical outlook of pluralist theory, in which intermediary groups were seen as protecting the stability of the political system against the destabilizing effects of mass movements.[21]

Below are listed a number of propositions of the type which can be set forth by a new group theory. These propositions consist of statements of relationships among social movements, interest groups, American political institutions, and public policy. These statements are mostly derived from my own observations of the public interest movements of the 1970's[22] and from Freeman's extraordinary study, The Politics of Women's Liberation. They are written in the spirit of respect for plural elitist theory, but viewing that theory as overly pessimistic about the possibilities for change and reform in American politics.

I. Civic-Balance Beliefs.[23]
A widespread belief system among politically active Americans is that special interests have too much power in political institutions. Such political skeptics believe in the need to balance the power of special interests with some new political force. This is termed the civic-balance belief system. Political liberals perceive the problem of special interests as one of corporations and subgovernments. Political rightists see the problem of special interests as one of excessive bureaucracy and of decadent elites, undermining traditional values through public policy.

II. Middle Class Political Movements.
Civic-balance beliefs are a cause of some of the middle-class political movements in America (Progressivism, consumerism, environmentalism, government reform). This is a permanent tendency, for it is based on a Madisonian perception of the existence of "minority tyranny."

III. Intermediary Groups. (Pinard-Freeman)
In America political movements usually form coalitions with some established interest groups, elements of political parties, and individual political candidates. Such intermediary groups and politicians legitimate some of the new ideas of the movement and spread such ideas through pre-existing communications networks. Intermediary groups also provide an organizational basis for lobbying Congress, the federal executive branch, and state governments. Such groups also initiate lawsuits on behalf of the goals of the movement.

IV. Movement Groups: Division of Labor. (Freeman)
The number and variety of movement groups proliferates. Most of them are short-lived. Various groups specialize in radical action, socialization of new participants, and lobbying political authorities. If the movement is to achieve immediate changes in public policy, there must be a general congruence of goals between the lobbying groups and the more radical groups.

V. Middle Class Leadership.[24]
Leadership by technically skilled middle-class elements is a prerequisite for political movements to achieve substantial success in public policy. Organizing demonstrations and political groups nationwide requires such skills. The poor and the working class may become active in movements, but they tend to participate sometime after the movement is launched.

VI. Elections.
If the movement coalition demonstrates initial electoral success, members of Congress, governors, and other elected officials will advocate the general aspects of the movement platform. They will--at least for a while--join the movement coalition.

VII. Movement Success in Public Policy.[25]
After its ideas become legitimate and widespread, a political movement often achieves a great deal of political success within a short time. At this stage, the movement coalition is able to defeat economic interests and subgovernments which oppose its goals.

VIII. Movement Losses in Policy.
However, when the costs of the new public policies instituted by the movement become apparent, the hitherto defeated economic interests, subgovernments, and ideological groups will reassert themselves, gain political strength, and lessen the power of the movement coalition over public policies.

IX. Generations of Lobbies.
A first generation of interest groups (the National Audobon Society, the Sierra Club) and a second generation of groups (Environmental Action) become established lobbies which "work within the system." However, the causes which produced a first movement "surge" may produce another anti-establishment surge (the anti-nuclear movement, the appropriate technology movement). To retain support, first and second generation lobbies will accommodate themselves to the ideas of the later movement surge.

X. Countering the Reform Cycle.
This combination of surges in public opinion and generations of interest groups provides a means to counter the effects of the reform cycle and of writing ambiguous statutes. To stop the reform cycle, a movement coalition must retain the capability of launching noninstitutional political action in combination with effective lobbying. Surges in movement opinion shake up political organizations, which otherwise frequently become oligarchic and/or bureaucratized. This process produces a more effective lobby.

XI. Bureaucratic Politics. (McConnell)[26]
A movement coalition creates friendly government agencies to administer the policies instituted by the movement. Such agencies become a part of the movement coalition. Rivalry will ensue between older governmental agencies and the newer, movement-created agencies. Those hostile to the movement will form alliances with older agencies to abolish or to restrict the newer, movement agencies.

XII. Various Ideologies.
Political movements in America are not necessarily liberal or radical in their goals (McCarthyism, the tax revolt).

XIII. Decentralization of Political Institutions.
The decentralization of American institutions sometimes enhances change through the provision of limited arenas of conflict, organizational bases for movement coalitions, and initial victories for the movement. However, if the movement has an impractical platform, it can be discredited through policy failure at the state and local level.

XIV. Television News.
Television news now has an important role in determining the course of social movements. It can accelerate the spread of movements by providing information about their existence, or it can hasten a movement's demise through exposure of unpopular antics.

XV. Protest As a Political Resource. (Lipsky)[27]
The poor and other groups lacking normal political resources--money, social status, established lobbying organizations, etc.--may create a new political resource, protest demonstrations, to influence public policy. The effectiveness of protest is related to the quality of publicity received, the congruence of its goals with the values of decision-makers, and its coordination with the need for organizational maintenance of the protest groups.

Discussion of Propositions

In general, the meaning of these items should be clear to the political scientist. However, a more extended discussion of some of the items is useful.

The first two (civic-balance beliefs; middle-class political movements) reflect a perspective that middle class protest is a normal phenomenon in America. Thus most observers are not surprised by the existence of movements to protest a "tyranny of the majority" over blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, gays, and even women (although not strictly true in the statistical sense). Nor is protest arising from poverty or from a sudden decline of income considered as surprising (e.g., populism of the 1890's, the Welfare Rights Organization, or recent demonstrations by farmers and truckers). But intuitively it is more difficult to understand protest by prosperous middle-class elements who would not seem to have major economic grievances.

My perspective is that most Americans are socialized into Madisonian conceptions, which become a major cause of middle-class protest. Conscientious American lawyers, politicians, philosophers, and citizens have put great effort into understanding and remedying the problem of a tyranny of the majority over the natural rights of citizens. But of course the idea of a minority "faction" is also basic to the Madisonian system of thought (Federalist #10):

> By a faction I understand a number of citizens whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.

Thus one can speak of conflicts between minority factions and "the public interest," here understood as the permanent and aggregate interests of the community. This is the familiar language of special interests versus public interests.

Madison, of course, expected that minority factions would be eventually controlled by "the republican principle," which enables

majorities to defeat minorities "by regular vote." (Federalist #10) The plural elitists, on the other hand, provide a set of arguments to the effect that minority factions are not controlled "by regular vote." My view is that during the Progressive Era, and during the 1970's, a major segment of middle-class America saw the world in plural elitist terms. In other words, they believed government to be controlled by a collection of minority factions of "special interests." Among some persons, this perception is enough to produce political activity toward the goal of rule by the majority.

In reference to the sixth item, it is important to see that elections sometimes provide an important vehicle for spreading political movements. U.S. Senators and other politicians were slow in checking Senator Joe McCarthy, because it was believed McCarthy could defeat his political enemies by his influence over the electorate.[28] Similarly, the tax revolt of 1978 became a national phenomenon because of the California referendum and gubernatorial election. The federal government in 1969 and in the next few years adopted much major environmental legislation largely because many members of Congress saw environmentalism as a way of gaining votes while making few enemies.

In regard to items nine and ten (generations of lobbies, countering the reform cycle), the appearance of the women's movement in the late 1960's caused an earlier generation of women's lobbies to become more active on feminist issues. Apparently something similar happened in the environmentalist area; the National Audobon Society became more active in lobbying for the environment; the Sierra Club, originally primarily a sportsmen's club, was captured by the environmentalists in the early 1960's.

A later surge in movement activity can induce established movement lobbying groups to become more active and to expand their lobbying goals. For example, there is a current surge in the environmentalist area to abolish the use of nuclear energy and to introduce "appropriate technology," which would be small scale and non-polluting (e.g., solar panels). While the leadership of environmentalist lobbies is uniformly anti-nuclear, the rise in the incidence and intensity of anti-nuclear opinion should cause such lobbies to become more active in opposing nuclear energy to attract new members and to prevent old members from directing their contributions elsewhere.

The "reform cycle" refers to the plural elitist proposition--which is clearly an important argument--that reform groups may win legislative victories, but will lose control over subsequent public policy after public interest in the issue wanes. However, control over public policy is not lost if movement interest groups can effectively lobby to counter the strength of the anti-reform coalition. One detriment to effective lobbying is the tendency for political organizations to ossify: to pursue an obsolescent platform and strategy, to reflect the idiosyncratic concerns of an oligarchic staff, to become overly bureaucratized. The argument is that social movements, and the various surges of opinion within them, retard such processes of organizational ossification, thereby making such lobbies more innovative and effective.

Proposition thirteen on the list is appropriately numbered. The decentralization of American institutions does not always work to retard social change. The tax revolt movement would have been longer in attaining national power, if it were not for the existence of state and local governments having significant autonomy and constituting

political subsystems which provide arenas for political organizing and for gaining initial political victories.[29] Independent political subsystems provide a means for anti-nuclear forces to block the construction of nuclear plants through passage of restrictive licensing laws, for example. Especially in the West, environmentalists have seized control of local governments and have enacted their platform through restrictions on population growth and industrial development.

But we must note the limitations of this proposition thirteen. Institutional decentralization apparently enhances the spread of conservative movements, having wide support among the middle class (the tax revolt), and it has enhanced the spread of various types of environmentalism. But the main thrust of the black civil rights movement was to institute federal restrictions on the power of state and local governments. Similarly, the women's movement might be stronger in a situation of centralized institutions, as the course of the Equal Rights Amendment is now demonstrating.

Policy failure demonstrated at the state and local level could undermine a political movement. For instance, if Proposition Thirteen type measures don't work, the drive to cut back the national government will be undermined.

The fifteen propositions are perhaps accurate generalizations about the relationships among social movements, interest groups and public policy in America. But actually the main point is that formulating such generalizations should constitute an important part of the study of American politics and government. As a mental experiment, the reader might ask him/herself: how is American government different in 1979 from what it was in 1959? The impact of social movements on public policy provides much of the answer.

Conclusion

A series of generalizations, such as the ones just stated, could form an important part of a new group theory. Such a theory would be influenced by the work of the Vanderbilt sociologists and by the Pinard-Freeman outlook. It would also incorporate the exchange theories of James Q. Wilson and Robert Salisbury in explaining the existence and nature of political groups.[30]

In a way, the new group theory already exists, but has not been codified. Recent research in the field of political groups tends to reject both pluralism and plural elitism, and to show a special concern for the relationship of groups to social movements. Such a perspective can be found, for example, in writers on public interest groups, such as Berry, Nadel, Vogel, Sabatier, and McFarland.[31] It is also found in recent studies of lobbying by Ornstein & Elder, Greenwald, and A. & D. Costain.[32]

In turn, the new group theory could serve as a basis for a new theory of power. It would not be pluralism, plural elitism, elitism, or corporatism. It would be something new.

Notes

[1]Robert A. Dahl, Preface to Democratic Theory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956); Dahl, Who Governs? (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961); David B. Truman, The Governmental Process, second edition (New York: Knopf, 1971); David Braybrooke and Charles E. Lindblom, A Strategy of Decision (New York: The Free Press, 1963); Edward C. Banfield, Political Influence (New York: The Free Press, 1961); Aaron B. Wildavsky, The Politics of the Budgetary Process (Boston: Little, Brown, 1964);Nelson W. Polsby, Congress and the Presidency (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964).

[2]Ralph Miliband, The State in Capitalist Society (New York: Basic Books, 1968); Nicos Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes (London: New Left Books and Sheed and Ward, 1973); Antonio Gramsci, Prison Notebooks (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

[3]Theodore J. Lowi, The End of Liberalism, second edition (New York: Norton, 1979), original edition published in 1969; Mancur Olson, Jr., The Logic of Collective Action (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965); E. E. Schattschneider, The Semisovereign People (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1960); Grant McConnell, Private Power and American Democracy (New York: Knopf, 1966).

[4]Walter B. Roettger, "Strata and Stability: Reputations of American Political Scientists," PS, 11 (Winter 1978), p. 9.

[5]Charles E. Lindblom, Politics and Markets (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

[6]Kenneth Prewitt and Alan Stone, The Ruling Elites (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 124.

[7]Responsible political parties is a theme in The Semisovereign People and other works by Schattschneider; juridical democracy is a prescription in Lowi's The End of Liberalism; while at the end of Private Power and American Democracy, McConnell calls for an active Presidency and Supreme Court and for strong, national-level political parties.

[8]See the works cited in footnote number 3 plus Murray Edelman, The Symbolic Uses of Politics (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1964); Morris P. Fiorina, Congress: Keystone of the Washington Establishment (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Theodore J. Lowi, "American Business, Public Policy, Case Studies and Political Theory," World Politics, 16 (July 1964), the source of proposition ten; Douglass Carter, Power in Washington (New York: Random House, 1964), Grant McConnell, The Decline of Agrarian Democracy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953), Lowi, The End of Liberalism, and McConnell, Private Power and American Democracy are sources for proposition eleven; Theodore J. Lowi, At the Pleasure of the Mayor (New York: Free Press, 1964); Marver Bernstein, Regulating Business by Independent Commission (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1955); Edelman, Symbolic Uses . . . ; and McConnell, Private Power . . . are sources for proposition twelve.

[9]James Q. Wilson, Political Organizations (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

[10]Olson, op. cit., pp. 145-46.

[11]Lowi, The End of Liberalism, p. 280.

[12]Ibid., p. 291.

[13]McConnell, Private Power . . . , p. 358.

[14]Lowi does take social movements into consideration in his The Politics of Disorder (New York: Basic Books, 1971). But I am unable to make this work jibe with Lowi's preeminent The End of Liberalism. It is perhaps significant that Jo Freeman, a Lowi student, relies little on The End of Liberalism in her book, The Politics of Women's Liberation.

[15]As David Truman noted in the introduction to the second edition of The Governmental Process (p. xxx): "Despite the somewhat limited applicability of Olson's theory, the insights from his work are numerous and valuable. The theory helps, for example, to explain a phenomenon noted by many observers--namely, what the late V. O. Key, Jr., referred to as the failure of groups to achieve their membership potential."

[16]See Philippe Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporatism?" Review of Politics, 36 (1974), p. 85-131; and P. Schmitter, ed., Corporatism and Policy-Making in Contemporary Europe, Comparative Political Studies, 10 (April 1977).

[17]William Alton Kelso, American Democratic Theory: Pluralism and Its Critics (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978).

[18]Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, The Concept of Representation (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

[19]Anthony Oberschall, Social Conflict and Social Movements (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973); John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements," American Journal of Sociology, 82 (May 1977), pp. 1212-1241.

[20]Maurice Pinard, The Rise of a Third Party, enlarged edition (Montreal: McGill and Queen's University Press, 1975), original edition published in 1971; Jo Freeman, The Politics of Women's Liberation (New York: David McKay, 1975), subsequently published by Longman.

[21]William Kornhauser, The Politics of Mass Society (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1959); Dahl, Who Governs?, pp. 305-325.

[22]Andrew S. McFarland, Public Interest Lobbies: Decision-Making on Energy (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1976), and Common Cause, unpublished manuscript.

[23]See McFarland, Public Interest Lobbies, pp. 6-20.

[24]Freeman, The Politics. . . , pp. 42-43, 44-70; Pinard, The Rise. . . , pp. 136-171.

[25]Orfield observed that environmentalism and the women's movement achieved legislative and legal victories in the early 1970's and thus were in the advantageous strategic position of defending the status quo against anti-movement coalitions. Gary Orfield, Congressional Power: Congress and Social Change (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), pp. 262-263, 298-306.

[26]McConnell, The Decline of Agrarian Democracy, op. cit. McConnell does not refer to movement created agencies, however, but tc those created by the New Deal federal administration.

[27]Michael Lipsky, "Protest as a Political Resource," American Political Science Review, 62 (1968), pp. 144-158.

[28]See Nelson W. Polsby, "Toward an Explanation of McCarthyism," in Nelson W. Polsby, Robert A. Dentler, and Paul A. Smith, eds., Politics and Social Life (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), pp. 809-824; Michael Paul Rogin, The Intellectuals and McCarthy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967).

[29]See Tax Revolt Digest, published by the California Journal, 1617 10th St., Sacramento, Cal., 95814.

[30]Wilson, Political Organizations, op. cit.; Robert H. Salisbury, "An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups," Midwest Journal of Political Science, 13 (1969), pp. 1-32.

[31]Jeffrey M. Berry, Lobbying for the People (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977); Mark V. Nadel, The Politics of Consumer Protection (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971); David Vogel, Lobbying the Corporation (New York: Basic Books, 1978); Paul Sabatier, "Social Movements and Regulatory Agencies: Toward a More Adequate--and Less Pessimistic--Theory of 'Clientele Capture'," Policy Sciences, 6 (1975); McFarland, Public Interest Lobbies, op. cit.

[32]Norman J. Ornstein and Shirley Elder, Interest Groups, Lobbying and Policymaking (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1978); Carol S. Greenwald, Group Power: Lobbying and Public Policy (New York: Praeger, 1977); Anne N. Costain and W. Douglas Costain, "Lobbying Groups as Interest Aggregators in Congress," unpublished manuscript, Anne N. Costain, Lobbying for Social Change: Congress and Women's Issues, in preparation.